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PREPAREDNESS: THE WAY TO PROCEED

THE ADVOCATES of so-called preparedness have overlooked one important thing. This Congress was not elected on any such issue, and has no mandate from the people or from any political party to dispense a billion of dollars in five years in the directions proposed. If a State legislature, without having been elected on any such platform or issue, were to propose to mortgage the citizens of the State to the extent of ten dollars a head, or fifty dollars per family, in a non-revenue producing enterprise, the members of such legislature would be forever condemned.

In this condition of affairs, no member of Congress can, as a representative of his constituency, vote for the pending program. There is but one method of procedure he can properly favor. He may vote for the measure proposed, with the proviso that the extraordinary provisions and expenditures shall not go into effect until the people have directly voted in their favor. Congress can further direct that at the next fall election upon every ballot there shall be inscribed in substance this proposition: "In favor of (or against) extraordinary expenditures of about one billion dollars for army and navy purposes." If a majority of the citizens of the United States then determine in favor of such proposition, every member of Congress, irrespective of his personal sentiments, will be warranted in following the instructions of the majority.

In this manner, and this manner only, can the whole question be raised above personal and party consideration and put before the people upon its naked merits.

This proposal merely extends to the nation a method of procedure common in every State of the Union. For instance, a few years ago, when the State of New York was considering the enlargement of the Erie Canal, the people by direct vote commanded the expenditure of one hundred and one million dollars, approximately the same amount per head for the people of that State as is involved in the present proposition for the people of the whole United States, although that was intended to increase, not weigh upon, the revenues. Upon the general idea of reference to the people, we have had the approval of the President, as expressed for the initiative and referendum, as well as the constant practice of seventeen States of the Union and the occasional practice of all the others.

The only possible objection that can be raised to this proposition is that it will involve a delay in national preparations. This delay need only be from July 1 of next year until the votes are counted in November; and as the President has assured us that we are not in danger at the present time, this delay cannot matter.

THE MAXIM OF NEIGHBORHOOD

IT IS no wonder that pacifists are torn in spirit over the present war situation. It is natural that we should be profoundly disturbed over our duty, especially to those across the sea. It is perfectly normal that we should fear that we may not be doing all that we should to stop the war. It is to be expected that we should resent the activities of the militarists, and, upon analysis, that we should be nettled at other pacifists who do not agree with us.

In the presence of such a situation is there any rule by which we may guide our steps? We think there is. We are of the opinion that charity must certainly begin at home; not that it must end there, if such were possible, but that at least it must begin there. "Give us this day our daily bread" is an inextinguishable part of our pater-noster. Unless we do get our daily bread we shall soon be incapacitated for helping others to get their daily bread, or daily anything else. The man who attempts to push his club, his church or fraternity, before first heeding the need of his own fireside will find that his efforts are misplaced, pathetic, and futile. To neglect real needs at home for the sake of some society or other is easily distinguishable, as a rule, as a mere spectacular display. The true leader can usually be best identified by the practical effects of his works among his own people, his own children, his brothers and sisters, his neighbors.

When A. Bronson Alcott and his party of enthusiastic social reformers began their co-operative farm near Harvard, Mass., Mr. Emerson wrote that if they did their work well, paid their bills, obtained the respect of their neighbors, and helped Harvard to a better plane of living, that then they were as safe as the sun. So the proof of the sincerity of the pacifist lies first in the effects of his work among those who know him best. If his theories win, for example, his wife, he may then try them upon the neighborhood. If they are accepted and if they help there, he may extend them to the State; then, if possible, to the nation and to the world. The maxim, therefore, is the maxim of neighborhood, by which we mean, let us help most those whom we can most help.

WHAT SHOULD PEACE SOCIETIES DO?

WE ARE in receipt of many letters asking what the peace societies should do at the present time. While we recognize that different societies, with their different constituencies, will wish to do different things, it is still true that there are certain general principles which may well guide us all. These principles may be briefly stated. The American Peace Society has the only program for the solution of the problem of war that has ever been accepted by nations and wrought, even in

part, into international practice. Its program, appearing on the fourth cover page of this number, contains no illusions. In it there is nothing of quixotism. As said so often and in such various forms, the American Peace Society stands for the principle that international wars will cease or be less frequent in proportion as the nations organize an effective substitute for force as a means of settling international disputes. The nature of this substitute outlined in the concrete by the great founder of this society, William Ladd, is neither nebulous nor theoretical. It has been accepted in principle by practically all the nations of the earth. It is, in brief, that there must be a congress and high court of nations. The peace societies, therefore, may well recall to the minds of their members this most important fact.

Our own view is that the present war will be settled by the sacrificing belligerents, and that the neutral nations will have little voice in the matter; but when the terms of peace have been arranged by the contending peoples, then there will be a Third Hague Conference where neutrals and combatants alike will make more nearly perfect the machinery of justice already at hand.

Therefore, let us learn anew day by day, as we may, the hideous absurdity of war. Let us extend the circulation and influence of *THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE*. Let us urge men and women to think upon this matter, to confer, to think again, and to join the American Peace Society now.

To the man who asks what may I do to help the peace movement, the reply is, Do you know what the peace movement is? If so, can you win to its support your nearest friend, your neighbor around the corner, your stenographer, or fellow workman? If so, win your ward, your city, your Congressional district, your State. This is the principle we have tried to state in the foregoing editorial, "The Maxim of Neighborhood." The duty of the pacifist at the moment is to help most those whom he can most help.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The Society of Friends.

The only Christian denomination which has a regular Department of Peace is the Society of Friends. It seems to us strange that this is so, especially in the light of the present tremendous insult to the Prince of Peace. The national assembly of the Society of Friends—the Five Years' Meeting—includes the Canada yearly meeting. This assembly has a peace committee, which in turn has a central executive committee. The yearly meetings of the society also have a peace committee. These committees are pushing the work in the various local churches, and are fearlessly petitioning Congress.

In no uncertain sense the whole peace movement is an outgrowth of the consecrated efforts of the Society of Friends. Through much teaching and repeated heroism this body of Christians has consistently stood for the abolition of international wars. Supremely right upon nearly every great question affecting the public good, they have been most consistently and encouragingly right upon this great problem of organized injustice and murder.

The work of these people in England at the present time caring thoughtfully for the non-combatant citizens of belligerent lands, their labors among the stricken, on the fields and in the hospitals of the war zone, their faith in the ultimate realization of their ideal in the presence of the war now upon us, are all consonant with their best traditions. Every believer in the importance of substituting law for force is heartened during these discouraging days by the rich consistency and constant loyalty of the Society of Friends.

A Suggestion to the Christian Church.

In this time of irresponsible quotations from the Bible and of wild misinterpretations of the Christian ethic, it would seem to be the duty of the Christian Church to restate, in language which the people can understand, that Jesus was "The Prince of Peace." An English correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette* expresses his views of "most professional ministers still drawing their salaries" in a suggestive and disquieting summary which reads as follows:

Christ did not wish that men might be like Him;
That is an error, springing who knows where.
Christ's purpose was that, in the distance dim,
A grand ideal, planet-like, might flare,
Subject for praise or theme on which to preach,
But never meant to come within our reach.

The very essence of ideals is
That they should ever hover overhead.
To be translated to realities
Immediately kills them; they are dead.
And what so hapless, sad, and tempest-tossed
As human beings with ideals lost?

The nearest we can get to what He willed—
Compatibly with reason. That should be
Our aim by day and night until fulfilled,
Pursued with unremitting industry.
The Master (as we read Him) would not ask
His children to perform a sterner task.

So, then, upon the future let us strive
To fix our thoughts, nor on the present dwell.
A day will dawn (for those still left alive)
When peace will come, and all once more be well,
And Christianity (less suspect then)
Again dispense its precious balm to men.

The Christian church might well ponder upon this sarcastic fling. Men should not be allowed to forget the words of the Master: "Put up thy sword; for all who take the sword shall perish by the sword."